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WILLIAM WADE/LONDON

A STRATEGIC VIEW OF THE SUPERPOWERS
(FOR AUTOMATIC RELEASE AT 0001 GMT FRIDAY MAY SEVENTH,
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ANNCR:

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES HAS JUST PUBLISHED ITS ANNUAL SURVEY OF THE WORLD MILITARY BALANCE -- INCLUDING NOTES ON THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION. FROM LONDON VOA CORRESPONDENT WILLIAM WADE PROVIDES THE BACKGROUND:

VOICE:

BOTH THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES EMERGED FROM 1975 -- ACCORDING TO THE INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES -- "SOMEWHAT CUT DOWN TO SIZE." NEITHER IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, NOR IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, NOR IN WORLD INFLUENCE DID THEY SEEM TO ACT LIKE SUPERPOWERS.

THAT'S THE VIEW OF THIS UNIQUE LONDON-BASED INSTITUTE -- AN INTERNATIONAL GROUP OF SCHOLARS AND STRATEGIC EXPERTS WHO MAKE IT THEIR BUSINESS TO COUNT UP NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND ASSESS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF REGIONAL CONFLICTS. WHAT GIVES THE INSTITUTE ITS PRESTIGE AMONG FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS IS ITS ANALYSIS AND OBJECTIVITY -- THE REASONING BEHIND ITS CONCLUSIONS.

WHAT CUT THE UNITED STATES DOWN TO SIZE LAST YEAR, SAYS THE INSTITUTE, WAS WATERGATE AND VIETNAM -- A CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS AND A MILITARY DEFEAT IN ASIA. WHAT CUT THE SOVIET UNION DOWN TO SIZE WAS STILL ANOTHER GRAIN HARVEST DISASTER, THE REPEATED ABSENCES OF PARTY CHAIRMAN LEONID BREZHNEV AND THE PROSPECTS OF A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP BEFORE TOO LONG.

THE INSTITUTE'S DIRECTOR, CHRISTOPH BERTRA, IS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE UNITED STATES' ROLE. HE SAYS THAT DESPITE A VERY DEEP INTERNAL CRISIS THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT LOST CORRESPONDING INFLUENCE ABROAD -- THAT IT REMAINS THE LEADER OF THE WESTERN ALLIANCE.

AND MISTER BERTRAM AND HIS ASSOCIATES TEND TO TAKE MODERATE VIEWS OF SOVIET STRATEGIC AFFAIRS. THE SURVEY, FOR EXAMPLE, OUTLINES THE BIG SOVIET NAVAL BUILDUP, BUT SAYS THE GLOBAL ODDS ARE NO LONGER MOVING IN FAVOR OF THE SOVIET SAILOR. THE SURVEY DOES N O T TAKE ALARMIST VIEWS OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN ANGOLA, AND IT NOTES PORTUGAL'S RETURN TO MODEPATE POLITICS.

THE SURVEY SAYS EAST-WEST DETENTE IS SOMEWHAT WEARY -- A TARGET OF SKEPTICS -- BUT STILL ALIVE AND HOLDING. THERE IS THE THREAT OF GROWING COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN ITALY AND OTHER SOUTH EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. ARMS CONTROL HAS MADE LITTLE PROGRESS IN THE PAST YEAR. BUT ON HE HOPEFUL SIDE, THE ENERGY CRISIS AND ECONOMIC RECESSION HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY MANAGED -- AND WESTERN EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA AND JAPAN HAVE EMERGED FROM THAT CRISIS WITH REMARKABLE POLITICAL STABILITY. IT'S A MIXED PICTURE THE INSTITUTE PRODUCES AFTER RANGING WORLD-WIDE TO PROVIDE ITS UNIQUE INSIGHTS INTO A YEAR OF HEADLINES.

(WATCH RELEASE TIME)

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